

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action dated August 18, 2009, in which the Examiner rejected claims 17-21 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,840,347 to Muramatsu et al. (Muramatsu) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,521,172 to Gilbert and in further view of US Patent No. 6,352,662 to Murphy et al. (Murphy). Claims 17-21 are pending, of which claim 17 is the only independent claim. Claims 1-5 have been previously canceled and claims 6-16 have been previously withdrawn.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. M.P.E.P. § 2143.03. Applicants respectfully submit that neither Muramatsu, nor Gilbert nor Murphy, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest each recitation of independent claim 17, as currently amended.

Without conceding to the validity of the Examiner's rejection, and solely in an effort to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claim 17 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions, as communicated to Applicants in the April 6, 2009 teleconference between Examiner and Applicants' representative, and as summarized in the Examiner's Interview Summary dated April 7, 2009. In particular, Applicants have amended independent claim 17 to include the features recited on page 15, lines 1-3 and 9-11 of the specification. In the Interview Summary, the Examiner stated that he would be inclined to withdraw the previous rejections if these features were included in the independent claim.

Independent claim 17 now recites, *inter alia*:

“...inserting a composite body including said internal-pressure holding tube and said prepreg into a vacuum chamber containing a forming die ***and a composite body support device, said composite body support device having an anti-deflection support base and a***

cantilever support base provided with a front support portion and a rear support portion;

positioning said composite body on said composite body support device such that said composite body is supported in cantilever fashion by said cantilever support base and is prevented from developing deflections by said anti-deflection support base...” (Emphasis added).

Accordingly, as suggested by the Examiner, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references, either alone or in combination, disclose a method for forming a hollow FRP article by internal pressure molding wherein a composite body is inserted into a vacuum chamber containing a composite body support device having an anti-deflection support base for preventing the composite body from developing deflections and a cantilever support base provided with a front support portion and a rear support portion for supporting the composite body in cantilever fashion, as explicitly recited in independent claim 17, as currently amended.

As the cited references do not teach or suggest each and every element of independent claim 17, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claim 17 for at least the reasons stated above. Furthermore, claims 18-21 depend from claim 17 and include additional recitations. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 18-21 for at least the reasons stated above in connection with claim 17.

As the present amendment merely adopts the Examiner's suggestions set forth in the Interview Summary dated April 7, 2009, Applicants respectfully request that the amendments to the claims be entered in the application. Indeed, in a teleconference between Applicants' representative and the Examiner on October 9, 2009, the Examiner assured Applicants' representative that the amendments would be entered in the application without an accompanying RCE so long as long as Applicants merely amended the claims in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 17-21 are now allowable, and an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Applicants submit that the present Amendment After Final is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner and contains no new matter. Further, Applicants believe that the present Amendment is merely formal in nature, is in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions, reduces the number of issues under consideration and places the case in condition for allowance. Applicants believe the present Amendment was necessitated by the outstanding Final Office Action and submits that the present amendments to the claims were not previously made as the prior claims were believed to be allowable over the cited prior art.

Applicants therefore respectfully request that the present Amendment After Final be entered under 37 CFR § 1.116 and the case be passed to issue.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number below to expedite resolution of any issues that the Examiner may consider to remain unresolved. In particular, should a Notice of Allowance not be forthcoming, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned for a telephonic interview, an Examiner's Amendment, or the like, while the outstanding issues are fresh in the mind of the Examiner.

It is believed that no fees or deficiencies in fees are owed. However, authorization is hereby given to charge our Deposit Account No. 13-0235 in the event any fees are owed.

Respectfully submitted,

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